

Message Text

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ACTION CU-05

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1199

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 1635

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC (FLORIDA STATE BAND), SY

SUBJECT: FLORIDA STATE BAND

REF: (A) DAMASCUS 1332

(B) STATE 144372

(C) STATE 133922

1. NEED DEPT'S URGENT ATTENTION ON QUESTION OF 10 SYRIAN POUND (SL) PER DAY SPENDING MONEY WHICH WAS WRITTEN INTO CONTRACT WITH FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY BAND. IN SUMMARY, THE SYRIANS MENTIONED IN INITIAL CONVERSATION ABOUT BAND THAT THEY WOULD PROVIDE, IN ADDITION TO ROOMS, BOARD AND LOCAL TRANSPORTATION, POCKET MONEY TO EACH BAND MEMBER OF 10 SL (\$2.75) PER DAY. THIS NEVER CONFIRMED IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS. WE WERE SOMEWHAT SURPRISED TO FIND THIS WRITTEN INTO CONTRACT SIGNED WITH FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY AND, QUITE OBVIOUSLY, THE BAND MEMBERS ARE NOW ASKING FOR THIS SUM.

2. IN INITIAL CONVERSATIONS WITH DIR GENERAL HAFEZ AT DAMASCUS INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR, HAFEZ INDICATED THAT SARG WOULD PROVIDE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FACILITIES AND SERVICES. AS INITIALLY REPORTED BY US, HE SAID SYRIANS WOULD PAY ROOM, BOARD, LOCAL TRANSPORTATION, 10 SL PER DAY SPENDING MONEY, SIGHTSEEING TOURS, SPECIAL EVENTS, .., \$ -44-, & ELEMENTS AND COSTS FOR SEVERAL CONCERTS OUTSIDE DAMASCUS. THERE FOLLOWED LONG PERIOD OF SOME INACTIVITY ON QUESTION WHETHER OR NOT BAND IN FACT WOULD BE OUR PRESENTATION. WHEN FINAL DECISION WAS MADE AND WE

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AUTHORIZED DISCUSS SONCRETE OFFER WITH HAFEZ, WE DID SO

ON THE BASIS OF REF (C). THE MESSAGE INDICATED WASHINGTON ASSUMED SYRIANS WOULD PAY ROOM, BOARD AND LOCAL TRAVEL. REF (A) REPORTS FINAL DISCUSSION WITH FAIR AUTHORITIES AND INDICATES THAT AUTHORITIES HAD CONFIRMED THEY WOULD COVER ROOM, BOARDS AND TRAVEL. THEY MADE NO MENTION OF 10 SL PER DAY POCKET MONEY AND, IN VIEW GUIDANCE IN REF (C) AND OUR BELIEF THAT SYRIANS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT FINANCIAL BURDEN OF SUCH A LARGE GROUP, WE HAD NO REASON TO RAISE IT OURSELVES IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS.

3. THE NEXT APPEARANCE OF THE POCKET MONEY QUESTION OCCURED ONLY TWO DAYS BEFORE THE BAND ARRIVED WHEN STEPHENS BROUGHT A COPY OF THE CONTRACT SIGNED WITH THE FLORDIA STATE UNIVERSITY. HAD WE SEEN A COPY OF THIS CONTRACT EARLIER OR BEEN AWARE OF ITS TERMS, WE WOULD SPECIFICALLY FLAGGED THIS ITEM AS NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH ORU UNDERSTANDING WITH THE SYRIANS.

4. OUR PROBLEM AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, IS NOT ONE OF HISTORY BUT OF HOW WE RESPOND TO THE REQUEST BY BAND MEMBERS FOR THEIR 10 SL (\$2.75) PER DAY POCKET MANEY. WE BELIEVE FINANCES ARE SERIOUS PROBLEM TO SYRIANS AND WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO ASK THEM TO FURTHER INCREASE THEIR OUTLAY. OUR READING OF CONTRACT IS THAT USG IS OBLIGATED TO PROVIDE POCKET MONEY. PLEASE ASVISE US URGENTLY HOW BEST HANDLE THIS EMBARRASSING SITUATION. WILL YOU AUTHORIZE US TO PAY POCKET MONEY AS SET FORTH IN CONTRACT?
SCOTES

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